

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MEXICO 02161 190145Z

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SUBJECT: MEXICAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE SPEAKS ON DRUG PROBLEM

REF MEXICO 252,

1. SUMMARY: ON FEB. 8, AT IGUALA, GUERRERO, MEXICAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE, JOSE LOPEZ PORTILLO, FOR FIRST TIME KNOWN TO US, MADE REMARKS ON PROBLEM OF MEXICAN DRUG PRODUCTION. HIS STATEMENTS ARE SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE THEY GIVE INDICATION OF HIS PERSONAL CONCERN; AND THEY EMPHASIZE NEED TO PROVIDE ALTERNATE INCOME SOURCES FOR FARMERS GROWING ILLICIT CROPS. FAVORABLE EDITORIAL APPEARED FEB. 10 IN NOVEDADES. HIGHLIGHTS OF HIS REMARKS ARE GIVEN BELOW. END SUMMARY.

2. IN HIS IGUALA SPEECH (MUCH OF WHICH WAS NOT DEVOTED TO DRUG PROBLEM), LOPEZ PORTILLO MADE INTER ALIA FOLLOWING POINTS:

A. HE CRITICIZED SHARPLY THOSE WHO WERE NOT SINCERE IN THEIR EFFORTS TO RESCUE CAMPESINOS FROM CLUTCHES OF INTERNATIONAL TRAFFICKERS.

B. HE PROMISED THAT AS PRESIDENT HE WOULD ELIMINATE "DARK INTERESTS" THAT MADE IT UNECONOMICAL FOR FARMERS TO GROW LEGAL CROPS, AND WOULD PROVIDE ALTERNATE SOURCES OF INCOME

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PAGE 02 MEXICO 02161 190145Z

TO LIBERATE FARMER FROM "THAT (DRUG) COLONIALISM."

C. EFFECTS CAN ONLY BE COMBATTED BY ELIMINATING CAUSES;
CAMPESENO IS ONLY POOR INSTRUMENT WHO SERVES
FOREIGN INTERESTS. LOPEZ HAS AGREED WITH GUERRERO GOVERNOR
FIGUEROA THAT "THE CAUSES OF THIS VICE, NOT THE EFFECTS,"
MUST BE DEALT WITH. "IF WE DO THIS BY A RATIONAL AND PLANNED
EFFORT, THE NEXT SIX YEARS WILL SEE A CONTINUATION OF THE
(ECONOMIC) TAKEOFF OF GUERRERO."

3. THE ABOVE REPORT WAS PUBLISHED FEB. 9, ON FOLLOWING DAY
NOVEDADES PUBLISHES EDITORIAL ENTITLED "CAMPESENO
AND THE DRUGS," WHICH APPLAUDED LOPEZ' STATEMENTS AND SAID THEY
WERE VERY WELL RECEIVED BY CAMPESENO WHO HAD HEARD LOPEZ
SPEAK.

4. COMMENT: THESE REMARKS ARE SIGNIFICANT NOT ONLY BECAUSE THEY
ARE FIRST STATEMENTS (WE BELIEVE) LOPEZ HAS MADE PUBLICLY
CONCERNING THE NARCOTICS PROBLEM, BUT ALSO BECAUSE
HE ECHOED THE SAME LINE TAKEN BY PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA DURING THE
LATTER'S MEETING WITH CONGRESSMEN WOLFF AND GILMAN (SEE REFTEL),
WHEN HE SAID ALTERNATE SOURCES OF INCOME MUST BE DEVELOPED FOR
THE MEXICAN FARMERS GROWING ILLEGAL CROPS. WE HAVE BEEN
SPECULATING FOR SOME TIME ABOUT WHAT LOPEZ' POSITION ON
NARCOTICS MIGHT BE, AND UNTIL NOW HAVE HAD NOTHING TO GO ON
EXCEPT OJEDA PAULLADA'S ASSURANCES THAT THE NEW PRESIDENT WOULD
BE CONCERNED AND COOPERATIVE. NOW WE HAVE ON RECORD THE FIRST
PUBLIC INDICATION THAT THE FUTURE PRESIDENT IS CONCERNED AT LEAST
WITH THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF MEXICAN NARCOTICS
PRODUCTION. END COMMENT.
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